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AUTHOR Nagel, Joane
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ABSTRACT

This paper hypothesizes the crucial factors necessary for the transformation of rebellion into separatist movements. It examines the Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq as a case study to test the hypotheses. Separatism is seen to include attempts by an ethnic group to achieve complete independence from the nation in which it resides. It can also include efforts to increase group autonomy ranging from increased local decision-making rights to confederation, just short of independence. In the first part of the paper the author discusses the conditions necessary to the development of separatist movements. First, the ethnic group must be included within a national boundary containing other dominant groups. The second condition of separation is unequal economic and political relations between the ethnic periphery and the central groups. Third, there must be penetration and activation of the ethnic periphery. Finally, separatism requires an organized periphery capable of coordinating the movement and linking it to outside groups. In the second part of the paper the author shows that the separatist movements of the Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq are an excellent case for the preliminary testing of the hypothesized conditions of separatism. The conditions outlined in part one are examined in the historic context of each nation. The author concludes that to the extent that these factors that spur separatist movements continue to characterize the modern world, we should expect to see an increase in ethnic conflict, separatist and otherwise. (RM)

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The Conditions of Ethnic Separatism: The Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq

Joane Nagel
University of Kansas
May, 1978

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Introduction

While separatist movements are not new historically, the proliferation of demands for autonomy or independence by ethnic groups in modern nations suggests changes are afoot. The increased number of new nations after World War II with diverse ethnic populations, the rise of national governments engaging in nation-building and expanding state authority, the improved organizational capacities of ethnic contenders for power and resources, and the current tendency of nations to avoid direct intervention into another nation's conflicts, but to arm and aid various internal parties, have all contributed to the observed rise in ethnic conflict and separatism.

Virtually all of the nations of Africa and much of Asia are the products of arbitrarily assigned national boundaries with traditional tribal lands extending over multiple borders or with several traditional groups included within a single national boundary. This has produced three distinct sorts of ethnic conflict: 1) groups fighting with one another for control of the local or national government, 2) one portion of a group crossing a national boundary to unite with another portion and "claim" the territory, and 3) a group demanding greater or complete independent sovereignty from the nation into which it was placed. The focus of this paper is on the third sort of ethnic conflict: separatist movements.

Separatism will be liberally defined here to include not only attempts by an ethnic group to achieve complete independence from the nation in which it resides, but also includes moves to increase group autonomy ranging from increased local decision-making rights to confederation, just short of independence. Movements aimed at simple decentralization of certain decisions often contain members with notions of wider discretion and demands frequently

escalate, especially when initial aims are achieved. Observers of full-fledged separatist movements often note with irony that just as the rebels' demands were being dealt with more fairly than ever before, they became obdurate and would settle for nothing less than independence. Examples of this include the Biafran secession, the Quebecois movement, and the Bengali separation from Pakistan.

Condition 1: Ethnic Differences

The modern world provides fertile grounds for the study of separatism. The phenomenon occurs in both industrial and nonindustrial nations: the Irish and Scottish in Great Britain, the Basques and Catalans in Spain, the Bretons in France, the francophones in Canada, the Kurds in Iraq, the Ibo in Nigeria, the Eritreans in Ethiopia, the Pathans in Afghanistan.

While not all of these separatist movements appear to be direct results of arbitrarily imposed national boundaries, all separatist groups dispute the legitimacy of the national government's claim to exercise authority over them. The extensiveness of the dispute, i.e., how little authority the ethnic group believes the national government should have, marks the degree of separatism.

Most nations are marked by some degree of ethnic heterogeneity. The degree of such "segmentation" is not, in and of itself, a convincing predictor of separatist activity. That ethnic differences exist is not sufficient for ethnic conflict to occur. In fact, the existence of ethnic differences, often conceived of as primordial, can be viewed as problematic--social constructions not irreducible social components (Geertz, 1963). Barth's (1969) description of ethnic differences as outgrowths of boundary formation, permits a view of ethnicity as emerging and fading as boundaries are strengthened or weakened. It has been recently argued that "tribalism" is the product

of political and economic competition rather than an outgrowth of ancient ethnic animosities (Melson & Wolpe, 1971; Harris, 1974). The material from which ethnic differences are built is present in all nations. The conditions that lead to the build up of ethnic awareness and the organization of ethnic movements occur with less frequency and are less easy to identify. The existence of ethnic divisions is, however, the first condition necessary to separatist action.

In order to understand when ethnic distinctions become activated and develop into social movements, two lines of inquiry must be pursued. The first involves analysis of the relationship between the ethnic group and the larger society, the second requires examination of the internal dynamics of movement organization.

Condition 2: Unequal Center/Periphery Relations

Focusing first on the relationship between the ethnic group and the larger society, several explanations for ethnic conflict employ the notion of center/periphery relations. While these arguments are addressed to political and ethnic conflict generally, they have implications for the separatist form.

Michael Hechter's study (1972, 1975) of Great Britain attributes the enduring quality of Celtic ethnic boundaries to internal colonialism: the unequal development of the English center vis-à-vis the celtic fringe, along with its concommittant economic and political inequalities.

Frank Young's discussion of "reactive subsystems" (1972) locates the causes of reactive movements (one example of which is ethnic separatism) in the degree to which the periphery is restricted from participating in the center economically, politically, and culturally, and in the degree to which the periphery is organized and in possession of adequate resources for mobilization.

Charles Tilly (1975) describes reactive collective action as resistance on the part of a group to perceived encroachments of the center. As national states and economies extend into peripheral areas, groups occupying the periphery respond by engaging in reactive collective action.

All three arguments are similar in their view of reactive movements as responses to unequal center/periphery relations. The world, however, is rife with inequalities. Like ethnic heterogeneity, most nations contain inequalities enough to satisfy the conflict justification needs of a variety of groups, whether they are organized around ethnicity or class or any other social category. Though center/periphery inequality becomes the second condition of separatism, like heterogeneity, it is not sufficient.

Condition 3: Penetration of the Periphery

Ethnic differences marked by inequality provide fertile social grounds for conflict. What is needed is a catalyst to provoke an aggrieved group to action. One such provocation suggested by Tilly, is an attempt by the political center to take over, influence, or control some portion of the periphery (1975). This penetration can take many forms, such as taxation, land reform, licensing, compulsory education, conscription--any action upsetting the peripheral status quo, especially when such action is interpreted by peripheral groups as usurping traditional authority. Crawford Young further argues that peripheral ethnic groups are likely to respond with hostility to penetration attempts when the central government is believed to be controlled by a dominant cultural group (1976, pp. 522-523). It is not just the expanding central authority that is resisted by peripheral groups, but that expansion produces an especially violatile response when it is undertaken by a dominant cultural group in control of the central government.

Ethnic groups can occupy a disadvantaged periphery indefinitely in a state of social inertia. Some precipitating event is necessary to trigger change. Action on the part of a central government which the periphery views as exclusionary and threatening is one such mechanism, activating ethnic peripheral groups and underlining their position of powerlessness and feelings of exploitation. Central government expansion is not the only possible precipitator, however. Outside influences, such as guerrilla infiltration, the expansion of a war, or the weakening of a coercive regime can activate an ethnic periphery. While these events occur with some frequency historically, it is the nature of the modern world that central governments expand, regulating and controlling sectors of society with increasing vigor (Meyer, et al., 1977). Ethnic groups find themselves with a great deal of opportunity to respond to what they might have considered until just recently an irrelevant central state.

Peripheral groups existing on the economic and political fringes of a nation must be pulled into social and political life, only then can they become potential combattants in a separatist movement. They must be a part of something in order to separate. Truly peripheral, powerless groups are only separatist candidates once they have been drawn into the political arena in some way. As long as they exist undisturbed and in isolation on the edges of national life, they are likely to remain invisible politically. The third condition necessary for separatist activity then, is the penetration of the periphery.

Condition 4: Organization of the Periphery

Extensive separatist activity (more than sporadic action) requires not only a segmented society characterized by inequalities and an activated

periphery. It requires the creation of a social movement. Separatism requires organization. Frank Young considers this peripheral organization a crucial feature of reactive movements generally (1972). While the statement that social movements need organization has a great deal of intuitive appeal, the organization of the periphery is the condition of separatism requiring the most elaboration. Two features of peripheral organization are central to understanding its relation to separatism, first, the conditions under which organization emerges and second, what it does.

The Emergence of Peripheral Organization

Both Oberschall (1973) and Tilly (1969) point to two possible bases of movement organization: communal and associational. Examples of communally organized groups are villages, clans, families, tribes, religious groups. Examples of associationally organized groups are political parties, trade unions, civic associations, economic and special interest groups. Both of these sorts of groups can become vehicles for social action, becoming particularly effective if several different groups are coordinated. Oberschall argues that the type of organizational basis, however, influences the intensity and duration of conflict. He sees associationally based movement organization as that form most likely to result in long-lived opposition movements--what is most commonly thought of as fully developed separatist movements. Communal groups in his view, are most likely to be perpetrators of shorter spurts of separatist activity, more tied to specific issues of the moment than to an elaborated strategy of separation (1973, pp. 120 ff).

Mobilization is the process of activating communal or associational groups and coordinating their actions into a social movement. Oberschall lists three conditions that he considers favorable to the initiation of mobilization:

1) the loosening of social control, 2) a focal point (often a precipitating incident), and 3) city/countryside coordination of movement efforts (1973, pp. 137 ff). Crawford Young suggests that a common cultural identity aids in such mobilization. Just as it can be argued that ethnicity is not a primordial social category, so ethnic identity must be constructed. Those factors Young finds most crucial to intensely shared cultural identity are: 1) density of communication, 2) an ideological statement regarding group uniqueness, historical virtues, and future destiny, and 3) the rise of a professional middle class and intelligencia (1976, pp. 44 ff). The development of cultural identity, however, can be seen as an outgrowth of mobilization as much as a contributor to it. Indeed, the factors Young points to as builders of identity are also useful to mobilizing efforts. For example, density of communication is commonly pointed to as a necessary feature of political organization (Marx, 1956, Stinchcombe, 1968).

Arguments involving the degree of isolation of an ethnic group are further relevant to the emergence of peripheral organization. Stinchcombe argues that institutions essential to social life tend to be geographically organized. The degree to which territorial and ethnic boundaries correspond, is the degree to which group members find themselves dependent on group institutions. Such dependence, Stinchcombe suggests, leads to high group loyalty which in turn makes members more accessible for mobilization efforts (1975, pp. 605-606).

Relevant to Young's discussion of intensity of cultural identity, groups that are geographically concentrated often develop efficient internal communication networks, as well as elaborated ideologies. Pinard suggests that cultural segmentation leads to the development of communal and associational organizations and a reservoir of leaders (1973, p. 22). While not necessarily geographic in nature, cultural segmentation coupled with geographic

concentration should be an even more powerful force in the formation of ethnic organizational vehicles and leaders.

The Functions of Peripheral Organization

There are two general areas of concern to any social movement: the internal functioning of the movement and the relationship between the movement and the outside environment. Organization is that feature of social movements that controls their internal workings and their external linkages. The efficiency of a movement's organization is intimately tied to its probability of success in achieving any or all of its aims.

Organization aids the internal functioning of a social movement by extracting resources, recruiting personnel, coordinating activities and subgroups, and providing a replaceable leadership structure. In any social movement any of these functions might be better fulfilled than others, but the longevity and intensity of the effort is dependent on the successful handling of these problems.

Organization aids in linking the movement to its external environment by serving as the articulator of demands and ideology, the focus for negotiation, and the publicity agency. A social movement which lacks a visible organization is severely handicapped in its ability to exploit its environment, particularly its political environment. Unless the rebels are extremely well armed, or up against an extremely weak government, negotiation is the only recourse. Governments are much more willing and able to negotiate with a movement with clearly identified goals and leadership than with elusive bands of guerrillas whose actions are clandestine and whose leadership is anonymous. Governments are used to dealing with groups organized into political parties, trade unions, religious organizations, even ethnic unions in ways other than

force. Terrorists and guerrillas are routinely responded to by governments with force alone. The greater the extent to which social movements contain diversified organizational components, the greater the likelihood that they will meet a governmental response other than pure force.

Movements can survive pure force responses only if they are in possession of great resources (unless the government forces are so incompetent or indifferent as to make any loose resistance tenable). The acquisition of resources requires interaction with the outside environment, probably extranational, and consequently requires an organizational structure which permits identification of leadership and an articulated ideology. Nations or organizations interested in aiding a rebel cause must know what that cause is and whom to contact. Movements must be in possession of a fair degree of organization even to receive publicity on the world scene. The amount of international interest a movement can generate, however, is probably more related to its length and its success than its initiation, except in the case of the invasion of ethnic cohorts, say across an adjoining border.

The above discussion has been addressed to movements generally. Separatist movements share the characteristics common to most social movements with the added problem of their intent. Most organizations, including national governments, are not known to easily decentralize or loosen control once gained. Separatist movements, by definition, are aimed at just such outcomes. A movement attempting to extend state control (e.g., agitation for a minimum wage) is much more likely to acquire a positive governmental response because action of this sort is more in keeping with the routine functions of modern governments. Most national governments are not constituted nor do they have routine mechanisms for relaxation of rules, the expulsion of members, or the excision of territory. The slow and violent divestiture of colonial

territories by many nations was not merely the result of the acquisitive and exploitative nature of the colonial masters. It was also a reflection of the lack of institutional arrangements for giving up people and land. That separatist action is often an historically drawn out and bloody process flows in part from the nature of the enterprise. The lengthiness of such action, however, provides what is often the most necessary component in the development of effective movement organization: time.

Summary

From the above discussion, the conditions necessary to the development of separatist movements are: 1) the inclusion of a group within a national boundary containing other, dominant groups, 2) unequal center/periphery economic and political relations, 3) the penetration and activation of the ethnic periphery, and 4) an organized periphery capable of coordinating the movement and linking it to outside groups. The most problematic conditions are the last two. Nearly all nations contain ethnic groups in possession of inferior economic and political resources. What transforms these groups into separatists is their activation and the development of their organizational capability. Factors such as geographic concentration, an expansive central government, and the aid of extranational groups are further facilitators, increasing the probability of a separatist movement emerging and expanding. The following hypotheses can be derived from this discussion:

1. The greater the ethnic distinctiveness of a group, the greater the likelihood that it will engage in separatist action.

2. The greater the degree of inequality between a subordinate ethnic group and the political and economic center, the greater the likelihood that the group will engage in separatist action.

3. The greater the degree of isolation of an ethnic group
   a. the greater the number of ethnically linked organizations and associations, and
   b. the lesser the likelihood that it will engage in separatist action.

4. The greater the degree of penetration of a peripheral ethnic group by the central state, the greater the likelihood the group will engage in separatist action.

5. The greater the degree of organization of an ethnic group, the greater the likelihood it will engage in separatist action.

6. The greater the degree of support from extranational groups to a separatist group,
   a. the greater the expected length of the action, and
   b. the greater the likelihood of the success of the separatist goals.

Kurdish Separatist Movements

An excellent case for the preliminary testing of these hypotheses is the Kurds of the Middle East. The Kurds occupy a territory that lies at the point of intersection of the borders of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and the U.S.S.R. The number of Kurds in the last two nations is quite small (less than 300,000 in each). The number of Kurds in the first three nations is substantial, (Iran = 2 million; Iraq = 2.5 million, Turkey = 4 million; Harris, 1977, pp. 114-115) and constitutes between 10 and 20 percent of each nation's population.[1]

The traditional Kurdish territory, Kurdistan, which has been inhabited by the Kurds an estimated 3 thousand years (Ghassemlou, 1965, p. 34), was divided into the five nations after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. Kurdish social organization at that time was largely tribal and semi-nomadic with various tribes occupying territories within one or more nations and moving across national boundaries seasonally. Tribal Kurds had, at that time (and today still have), a reputation as fierce warriors. Much of their

[1] Estimates of Kurdish population are extremely variable. Kurdistan, the journal of the Kurdish Student Society in Europe (1974 , vol. XVII) reports the populations as: Iran = 3 million; Iraq = 3 million; Turkey = 5 million; while the various government estimates range from 0 in the case of Turkey, to numbers considerably less than those above in the text.

energy was spent in frequent fighting among themselves and with their traditional enemies, e.g., the Christian Assyrians and Armenians, and the Muslim Azerbaijani.

Due to their penchant for pillage and looting and their lack of unity, various Kurdish tribes were used historically by local and European governments as mercenaries and agitators. Different Kurdish tribes were allied with both the Russians and the Turks during the First World War and Kurdish loyalties to a particular government were unpredictable. Turkish Kurds, for instance, were drafted into the Turkish army during World War I and fought against the Russians and Persians (Safrastian, 1948, pp. 75-76), while Iraqi Kurds joined the Russians in 1912 to engage both the Turkish and Persian Kurdish units in combat (Longrigg, 1953, p. 58). Nearly all Kurdish tribal uprisings against local governments from the late 1800's to 1975 were met with the combined resistance of the government in question and the rebels' traditional tribal enemies. The numerous uprisings of the Barzani tribe of Iraq brought a military response from Barzani opponents, the Baradosti and Zibari tribes, as well as the Iraqi government (O'Ballance, 1973).

As the Kurdish population spread into towns and cities, the incessant tribal squabbles were complicated by disputes between tribal and detribalized Kurds. These disputes emerged during the interwar period and mainly centered around increasingly organized town-based moves for Kurdish rights and autonomy.

The patterns and successes of the many Kurdish revolts varied in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. It was only in the last that what might be called a large-scale separatist movement was staged. Distinguishing a revolt from a separatist movement is somewhat arbitrary. Partly it has to do with the scope of the conflict and partly with the intent of the rebels.

The recorded desire for Kurdish autonomy predates the establishment of the modern boundaries of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. The first signs of Kurdish

nationalism, albeit limited, emerged in 1880 when a Turkish Kurd, Shaykh Ubeidullah invaded Persia over the alleged mistreatment of local Kurds by the Persian government and during the invasion massacred several thousand Azerbaijani (Persian Turks). Ubeidullah was exiled to Mecca where he died in 1882 (Arfa, 1966, p. 24).

It was not until post-World War I that resistance to local governments began to escalate. In all three nations, Kurds failed to recognize the authority of the central government over their affairs. Their movements ignored national boundaries (which were drawn through the mountainous area of Kurdistan and nearly impossible to defend), though the Kurds often used the boundaries for protection. When the troops of one government became overwhelming, rebelling tribes fled to another country. Since the three nations were often hostile to one another, pursuing troops dared not venture over the national boundary for fear of an international incident.

In order to understand the processes which produced a separatist movement in Iraq in the 1961-1975 period, and no complementary Kurdish movements in Turkey or Iran as far back as 15 years prior, the conditions previously outlined will be examined in the historic context of each nation.

While the history of Kurdish separatism varies in the three nations, in all three, the Kurdish area was and is underdeveloped relative to local standards, with high rates of illiteracy, low per capita income, and high mortality rates (Smith, et al., 1971). Their political position varies from a complete lack of recognition in Turkey to limited political influence in Iran and Iraq, although neither of the latter two nations is particularly participation-oriented and neither is anxious to encourage Kurdish partisanship.

There are similarities in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq with regard to: 1) Kurdish resistance to local government authority, 2) economic underdevelopment

of Kurdish areas, 3) limited Kurdish access to local government, 4) geographic concentration of tribal and detribalized Kurds in each nation, and 5) a traditional lack of unity within the Kurdish population of each nation. In all three nations, the likelihood of the Kurds engaging in separatist action is equal according to the first three hypotheses listed above.

The three nations vary in: 1) patterns of central state attempts to penetrate and control Kurdish regions, 2) Kurdish internal organization, and 3) the role of outside governments in Kurdish movements. These three areas of variation correspond to hypotheses 4, 5, and 6. Since all three nations had the same potential for separatism insofar as Kurdish resistance to local authority, unequal economic and political resources, geographic concentration, and lack of Kurdish unity were concerned, we should then expect the degree of penetration, Kurdish organization, and extranational involvement, to account for differences in the degree and success of Kurdish separatist action in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.

Turkey

The abolishment of the Caliphate by Kemal Ataturk in 1924, provoked the first twentieth century large-scale revolt of Turkish Kurds. In February, 1925, Shaykh Sa'id launched a several thousand person jihad (holy war) against the "godless" Turkish government. This revolt enjoyed a degree of popular support by Turkish citizens also opposed to the Kemalist regime. The looting which accompanied the revolt, however, turned the population against the rebels and brought down the revolt three months after its beginning. Sa'id and nine of his companions were hanged (Arfa, 1966, pp. 33-37). The Sa'id revolt was considered more of a reactionary movement seeking to restore the traditional religious government than a bid for Kurdish autonomy (Harris, 1977, p. 115),

though Kurdish freedom was used as a rallying cry. Subsequent revolts, however, took on a strong nationalist air.

The next revolt occurred in 1930, led by Sa'id's son, Salad-ed-Din and former Turkish army officer, Ihsan Nuri. The revolt involved several northern tribes and lasted two months. The hoped for alliance of southern Kurdish tribes was not forthcoming and the revolt was severely repressed by the Turkish army (Arfa, 1966, p. 42).

In 1937, the Turkish government began a campaign of penetration into the Kurdish occupied eastern vilayets. Police posts, schools, and roads were built and the Kurds revolted once again. Shaykh Saiyid Reza led what was to be the last large scale resistance of Turkish Kurds. The revolt lasted several months and was accompanied by Kurdish appeals to the Iraqi and Syrian governments to intervene in a Turkish policy of extermination. The revolt went unaided and Shaykh Saiyid Reza, and his two sons, and several others were executed in November, 1937 (Arfa, 1966, p. 44). There were several small revolts in 1943, led by Shaykh Sa'id Biroki, and in 1960, following the overthrow of the government by a military junta, but these were quickly put down (Harris, 1977, p. 116).

Turkish government policy toward the Kurds has been one of severe repression accompanied by forced migration of Kurdish tribes from the eastern region to the south and west and relocation or detention of tribal chiefs. Kurdish language, dress, organizations, and celebrations have been banned since the 1930's. The word "Kurd" is considered inappropriate in polite discourse and the very existence of the Kurds is denied by the government. They are "mountain Turks" who have forgotten their language (O'Ballance, 1973, p. 29; Kinnane, 1964, p. 45).

Turkish attempts to control Kurdish territory was met with resistance. The low level of Kurdish organization, including lack of universal tribal support, the near non-existent political organization of detribalized Kurds, and the failure of any other nation to support Kurdish struggles, produced weak, quickly destroyed reactive movements. The relative strength of the Turkish government and the weakness of the Kurdish nationalists aborted a full scale separatist movement in Turkey.

The case of Turkey seggests support for hypotheses 5 and 6. Hypothesis 4, however, that the greater the degree of penetration of a peripheral group by the central state, the greater the likelihood that the group will engage in separatist action, requires amendment. A strong penetration campaign by the Turkish government to occupy and control the Kurdish periphery proved quite detrimental to Kurdish separatist aspirations. What weak organization that existed was destroyed and action was stopped. A small amount of penetration strengthens opposition, a great deal of penetration can destroy it. Hypothesis 4 should be amended to:

To the extent that an ethnic group's capacity for organization and action remains viable, the greater the degree of penetration of a peripheral ethnic group by the central state, the greater the likelihood the group will engage in separatist action.

Iran

The close of World War I found Iran a nation occupied by the British and Russians with a crumpling central government and uncontrolled, often despotic regional governors. It was the governor of Tabriz, in northern Iran, whose murder of Ja'far Aqa, son of the Kurdish Shakkak tribal shaykh, that sparked the first large twentieth century uprising. Aqa's brother, Isma'il, commonly known as Simko, led a revolt, beginning in 1920, that lasted over two years

and spanned a good deal of Iranian Kurdistan. Simko occupied the towns of Mahabad and Rezaiyeh and openly spoke of Kurdish autonony (Arfa, 1966, pp. 48-62). Upon defeat in 1922, he fled to Turkey only to return in 1925 to lead another revolt a year later.

The coup by Reza Khan Pahlavi, in 1921, led to a strengthened central government and enlarged military capacity. The Russians left Iran and the British presence diminished, though did not disappear. The British were to aid the government in putting down further rebellions by Simko in 1930 (during which he was killed) and Shaykh Tafar of the Hamadan tribe, in 1931 (O'Ballance, 1973, p. 31). Both revolts met harsh resistance by the Iranian military. No significant Kurdish activity against the government occurred until the Second World War. During the post-1930 period, the Kurds had been largely left to their own devices by a government whose concerns were focused south on Teheran and the oilfields on the Persian Gulf.

The World War Two invasion of Iran by Soviet and British forces resulted in the disorganization of the Iranian army that had been keeping the peace in the north. In 1941, Hama Rashid led the Baneh tribe across the border from exile in Iraq and occupied the town of Baneh. He was ousted by British troops in the summer of 1942, but unrest returned to the region in the form of the first and only declared autonomous Kurdish republic.

The 1940's marked a new era in Kurdish nationalism, that of nontribal organizations. A secret society, Komala (Life), which had been created during the 1930's, but lay dormant during most of the inter-war period, was reactivated in 1943, when a Central Committee was elected by about 100 members (Eagleton, 1963, pp. 34-35). The declared purpose of Komala was Kurdish autonomy and its members were detribalized, educated Kurds. Its publication, Nishtman (Homeland), was widely circulated in the Kurdish regions of Iran and Iraq (Longrigg, 1953,

p. 324). A similar organization had sprung up in Iraq, Hewa (Hope), and in March, 1944, the two groups met in Iraq, followed by another meeting in the summer of 1944, in Iran. A meeting was organized for August, 1944, where representatives met at Mt. Dalanpar at the intersection of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey and signed a pact providing for mutual support for a Kurdish homeland (Eagleton, 1963, p. 36).

The organization attracted Mullah Mustafa Barzani, head of the powerful Barzani tribe of Iraq. On the run into Iran from an unsuccessful revolt in Iraq in 1945, Barzani arrived at Mahabad and joined the fast gaining movement for independence. Conditions were excellent for such a move. Reza Shah had abdicated to his son at Allied urging in 1941. The Iranian army was weakened, and the Soviets had developed an interest in the Kurdish mobilization.

The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad was established in January, 1946, simultaneous to the constitution of an Azerbaijani republic at Tabriz, in northern Iran. Both republics were encouraged by arms and aid from the Soviet Union, though the Mahabad republic was the less favored. Qazi Muhammad was elected the president of the Kurdish republic and Mullah Mustafa was placed in command of the Mahabad republic's army. Though the most well organized movement up to that point, the republic had failed to gain the support of enough of the suspicious and feuding Iranian Kurdish tribes (Eagleton, 1963). The republic was short lived. The Soviets evacuated in May, 1946, and the combined forces of the Iranian army and the opposed Kurdish tribes managed to retake Mahabad in December (Harris, 1977, p. 123).

Teheran began a concerted effort to penetrate and control the Kurdish areas for once and for all. Qazi Muhammad and several colaborators were hanged. (Mullah Mustafa had retreated to the Soviet Union.) The Iranian government used strategies similar to those employed in Turkey. Roads, schools, and police

stations were built in the north and for a brief period (until the middle 1950's) Kurdish language, clothing, and customs were outlawed. The Shah relocated several tribal leaders to Tehe an and kept a significant military force in the north.

The relative success of Iranian Kurds, as compared to those in Turkey, in establishing an autonomous region, though briefly, was attributable to the weakness of the central government, the Kurdish organizational capacity to communicate with several tribes across national boundaries and to form an alliance between detribalized Kurds (the Komala) and tribal forces (the Barzani), and the aid of a foreign nation in supplying those resources not easily available, primarily arms. The withdrawal of Soviet supplies greatly contributed to the early fall of both the Kurdish and Azerbaijani republics. Since 1946, no Kurdish action has been reported in Iran.

While the end of the Iranian Kurdish conflict mirrored the fate of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, its beginning was somewhat different. Rather than responding to actions by the political center, it was the incapacity of the center for action that seemed to pave the way to Mahabad. Once again, hypothesis 4 is a trouble spot. In this case the hypothesis is not violated as was the case with the Kurds in Turkey. Here it simply does not appear to be a necessary condition for separatist action to occur. That there was no penetration of the Kurdish periphery prior to the initiation of a substantial amount of separatist activity indicates that some activating force other than central state penetration must have moved the Kurds to action. In the case of Iran, several factors combined to make the declaration of independence propitious. The first was a particularly rebellious tribe, the Baneh, setting the pattern of occupying territory in the name of Kurdish autonomy. The second was the involvement of Kurds from both Turkey and Iraq, creating an

atmosphere of pan-Kurdism and establishing a wider base of support than any separatist activity had heretofore enjoyed. The third was the simultaneous secession of the Azerbaijani, providing encouragement to the Kurds and a diversionary problem for the Iranian government. In this context the Soviets aided and the Iranian government faltered, the moment was not to pass unseized.

Iraq

It is interesting that Iraq was the site of the most numerous and lengthy struggles for Kurdish autonomy, while simultaneously the most accommodating to Kurdish demands. In the 1920's the pre-independence Iraqi government provided the Kurds with a number of government appointments, including a Cabinet post and several Deputyships (Longrigg, 1953, p. 193). This practice continued after independence in 1932, up until the present. The Iraqi government often used loyal Kurdish officials as negotiators and intermediaries in those Kurdish uprisings not directly handled by military force. Kurdish officers in the Iraqi army were common. The first military coup in modern Iraq's history was executed by General Bakr Sidqi, a Kurd (Longrigg, 1953, pp. 247-256; Khadduri, 1960, pp. 73-74).

The first twentieth century Kurdish bid for autonomy began in May, 1919. The British had appointed Shaykh Mahmoud of the Barzinji tribe, governor of the Suleimaniya region of northern Iraq. He drove out the small British force there and proclaimed independence (O'Ballance, 1973, pp. 20-21). He was routed by a British division a few months later and fled to Iran. Shaykh Mahmoud was a recalcitrant nationalist, however, and he was to repeat his 1919 actions several times during the next 25 years, always seizing a town, declaring independence from Iraq and being driven or exiled to Iran (Schmidt, 1964, pp. 62-67).

In 1927, the Barzani tribe emerged as the main force in the struggle for Kurdish autonomy, a struggle which was to last 50 years. The first major twentieth century Barzani conflict was not separatist in nature, but was inter-tribal. Barzani Shaykh Ahmad had embraced Christianity and urged his followers to eat pork. This deviation from orthodox Muslim practices so outraged the neighboring Baradosti tribe as to provoke an attack which required the intervention of the Iraqi army. This only exacerbated already bad relations between the two tribes and brought the Baradosti to the aid of the Iraqi government during many of the subsequent battles between Barzani and government forces (Arfa, 1966, p. 188).

The Barzani engaged in the 1929 anti-election riots in Suleimaniya and led revolts against the government in 1934, 1935, and again in 1941 (Khadduri, 1960, pp. 61; New York Times, September 19 [5], 1941). From this time until the Qasim coup in 1958, the Kurds refrained from rebellion since they were generally ignored by a central government beset by continual coups and personnel changes. The only revolt of any proportion occurred in 1945 and was led by a figure who was to dominate all future Kurdish action in Iraq, Mullah Mustafa Barzani.

Mullah Mustafa first appears in accounts of Kurdish activity in the late 1920's. He was placed under house arrest in Suleimaniya. Iraq, from 1932 to 1943, at which time he escaped to Iran and played a role in the 1945/46 Iranian Kurdish revolt as General of the Mahabad Army, briefly leaving Iran to lead an insurrection in Iraq in 1945. After the fall of the Mahabad republic, Barzani fled to the Soviet Union where he remained in exile until 1958.

The periods during and following the Second World War were marked by Kurdish political organizing in Iran and Iraq. The 1946 collapse of the Mahabad republic and subsequent Iranian government measures to control Kurdish activism,

relocated Kurdish political organizations, rebellious tribes, and hopes for autonomy to Iraq. In the late 1940's there were four Kurdish nationalist organizations which differed in aim and composition and which often competed for membership. They were 1) the Heva party of Iraq, a leftist group composed of urban intellectual Kurds, quietly suspicious of and antagonistic toward the feudal, theocratic tribal shaykhs such as Mullah Mustafa Barzani, whom it reluctantly recognized as the leader of the Kurdish movement, 2) the Freedom Group, formed by Mullah Mustafa and several tribal leaders, more traditional than the Heva whom its members considered radical communists, intent upon destruction of traditional Kurdish custom and tribal organization, 3) the Komala, which was the organization that launched the Mahabad republic and whose membership was similar to Heva in ideology and origin, and 4) the Khoybun, the oldest group, composed of more conservative intellectuals favoring a western style democratic pan-Kurdish state. Of the four organizations, Khoybun was the only one that sought to unite Kurds from the five nations into which they had been divided. The other three sought autonomy within Iraq (Arfa, 1966, pp. 123-124).

In 1948, Heva dissolved to form the Kurdish Democratic Party which in turn produced the United Democratic Party of Kurdistan (UDPK) headed by Jelal Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmed. Mullah Mustafa's Freedom Group weakened during his exile, though the members remained loyal to him. The members of the Komala became associated primarily with the UDPK, the Khoybun remained a fringe group (O'Ballance, 1973, p. 68).

The UDPK was the strongest Kurdish nationalist organization in Iraq when, on July 14, 1958, 'Abd al-Karim Qasim, Chairman of the Free Officers Movement, overthrew the monarchy and Iraq entered a period of reform (Dann, 1969, p. 19). Khadduri notes that although Qasim's coup was a coup like many before it, "before 1958 no attempt had been made to overthrow the dynasty or change the

system of government" (1969, p. 15). Qasim invited Mullah Mustafa Barzani to return from the Soviet Union and head the UDPK. This placed Barzani in a difficult position. His support was mainly from tribal leaders who distrusted the UDPK's urban membership and leadership. The UDPK was equally suspicious of Barzani and his allies, but needed tribal support to negotiate with Qasim for autonomy. Barzani accepted the chairmanship of the UDPK. While it broadened his support in the cities, it worsened his traditionally bad relations with the Baradosti, Lolani, and Zibari tribes. This triangle of the UDPK, the Barzani, and the hostile tribes was used by Qasim in subsequent years to weaken growing Kurdish nationalist demands. His strategy involved arming the hostile tribes against the Barzani and negotiating with UDPK leaders to undermine Mullah Mustafa's authority (O'Ballance, 1973, pp. 70-73).

During the 1958 to 1961 period, Barzani's attempts to unite the various endlessly feuding Kurdish tribes and maintain control of the UDPK which had been renamed the Democratic Party of Kuridstan (DPK) at Qasim's insistance, matched the patterns of shifting alliances in the Qasim regime. There were several attempts on Qasim's life and his position deteriorated. The Kurdish attempts to obtain local autonomy to be guaranteed by the Iraqi constitution were not responded to, and a trip to the U.S.S.R. by Barzani seeking support for Kurdish autonomy was equally unsuccessful. In February, 1961, Qasim banned the last Kurdish newspaper in circulation. Mullah Mustafa returned to the north from fruitless negotiations in Baghdad and began preparations for what turned out to be an intermittant 15 year war with the Iraqi state.

In June, 1961, the DPK presented Qasim with a list of demands including authorization of the use of Kurdish in Kurdish territories, oil revenue shares from the Kurdish claimed Kirkuk oil fields, and local control of the police and schools. Qasim rejected these and banned the DPK whose members then also

left for the northern mountains. The first clash between the Barzani and their allies and the Iraqi government occurred in September, 1961, when the Iraqi Air Force bombed the northern mountains (New York Times, September 17 [22], 1961).

The story of the Kurdish war during the next 15 years was one of conflict and rapprochement with the various Iraqi governments to follow Qasim, alternating rivalry and cooperation between Barzani, the DPK, and the hostile tribes, and slowly improving Kurdish military and political organization. The Kurds learned late the value of world opinion and international publicity to such a struggle and never obtained UN approval or support. The only nation to come to their aid was Iran, who did so for reasons of its own, mainly those of occupying the Iraqi army and creating disorder in Iraq with whom Iran was near war from 1965 to 1975.

The Kurdish forces were divided into those controlled by Talabani's DPK and Mullah Mustafa's tribal followers. From 1961 to 1964 the two leaders occupied separate territories at Barzani's demand. The Kurdish fighters of both groups were organized into the Pesh Merga ("facing death") in 1962, with the DPK group much better organized than those under Barzani, the latter retaining traditional tribal authority patterns and only loosely controlled by Barzani.

A DPK-disputed 1964 cease-fire between Barzani and 'Arif, Qasim's successor, brought the two Pesh Merga factions into open conflict. Barzani drove the DPK forces into Iran where they remained for a year. From 1965 to 1970, several attempts were made by each side on the other's leader. Talabani emerged as the major liaison between the Pesh Merga and the Iraqi government, although his relations with Barzani remained cool.

The relationship between the Pesh Merga and the hostile tribes, known as Jash ("little donkeys"), steadily improved over the years, Jash numbers

dwindling from 10,000 in 1961 to less than 2,000 in 1970 (O'Ballance, 1973). Many joined Barzani. The Iraqi army was itself a great source of personnel and weapons, providing a steady flow of Kurdish officer and enlisted deserters to the Pesh Merga.

The Pesh Merga provided more than military support in the Kurdish regions which were inhabited by noncombattant Kurdish people. It organized public works projects as road building, schools, hospitals, sanitation; it provided mail services, printed newspapers, and released communiques. These functions were generally better organized in the DPK sector, though they improved over time in the whole Kurdish region.

The pattern of combat between the Kurdish forces and the Iraqi army between cease-fires (in 1963, 1964, 1966/67, and 1971/73) was one of weak Iraqi offensives, Kurdish entrenchment, and eventual stalemate. The format usually began with an Iraqi spring offensive which pushed the Kurds up into the mountains where they remained until snowfall, when the Kurds slowly began moving down the slopes to regain some territory until the following spring. The cease-fires likewise followed a pattern.

Figure 1 shows the number of Kurdish events (as coded from the New York Times and various historical accounts reported here) from 1961 to 1975, and the rise and fall of the four Iraqi regimes that came to power during this time. At the beginning of each regime's reign, the Kurds would agree to a cease-fire, negotiate, fail to obtain their demands, and retreat to the mountains to fight.

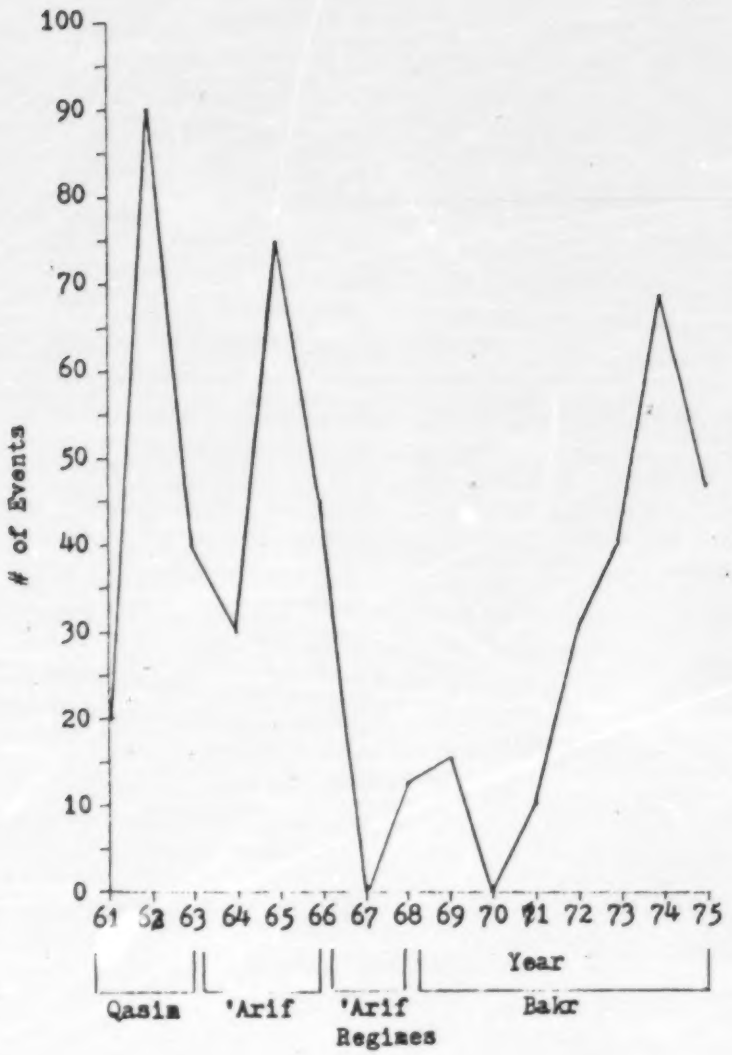
[Figure 1 about here]

The last offensive launched against the Kurds began in 1973. This time the Kurds met a better armed, better organized Iraqi army, supplied by the Soviets as a result of a 15-year Treaty of Friendship signed in 1972 (Harris,

Figure 1

Rates of Kurdish Reactive Action

Iraq, 1961-1975



1977, p. 120). The Kurdish supplier of arms, Iran, had little interest in committing the personnel necessary to meet such a force since the Shatt-al-Arab waterway dispute between the two nations already had them periolously close to war. Mullah Mustafa began his strongest effort at international appeal. And although the Pesh Merga were the most unified during their history, a peace agreement was made between Iran and Iraq and the only Kurdish link to the outside was severed.

The Iraqi army and air force launched a final, brutal attack on the Kurdish area in the Apring, 1975. Thousands of Kurds, including Mullah Mustafa Barzani, fled into Iran until the border was closed. U.S. complicity in the Iranian arming and eventual betrayal of the Kurds was revealed in the Pike Report's description of CIA activity and was responded to by then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in a classic statement of amorality: "Covert activity should not be confused with missionary work" (San Francisco Chronicle, February 16 [7], 1976).

After the Iranian-Iraqi détente, the Iraqi state pursued a policy of penetration and control of Kurdish areas similar to those employed by Turkey and Iran. Tribal leaders were relocated, military presence increased, non-Kurds were moved into Kurdish areas, Kurds were moved out, and Kurdish activity was severely curtailed (Harris, 1977, p. 124).

It was in Iraq that the Kurds launched their most long-lived and strongest bid for autonomy. It was the Iraqi Kurdish movement that was the best organized, achieving a degree of Kurdish unity unparalleled in history. It was the Iraqi Kurdish movement that attracted the most international attention and support of the three Kurdish actions. And it is the Iraqi Kurdish movement that best fits the model of separatism outlined here. The 1961-1975 conflict began following the rise of a mobilizing Iraqi government from which the Kurds

saw themselves excluded. Their history of rebellions with various governments served as an initiating force from which evolved a better organized, stronger bid for autonomy. The intervention of Iran in the form of arms and materiel is exemplary of a common pattern among modern nations to arm groups opposed to a government to which the arming nation is also opposed. The Soviet Union had used similar tactics against the Persian government by aiding the Kurds and the Azerbaijani, as had the British and Russians by arming the Assyrians and Armenians against the Persian and Turkish governments respectively.

Conclusion

The cases of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq and the separatist action engaged in all three by the Kurds, provide at least preliminary support for the hypotheses outlined here. The presence of expanding central states, increasingly well organized ethnic groups, and interested third party nations, are all crucial factors in the modern transformation of rebellions into separatist movements. These historic developments greatly contribute to explaining variations in the rebellious history of the Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. And to the extent that these developments continue to characterize the modern world, we should expect to see an increase, rather than a decrease in ethnic conflict, separatist and otherwise.

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